

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on September 26, 2013.

Members Present:

Nancy Aposhian
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.
Merlin Ellis
Melissa Johnson
Robert Valverde
Dr. Robbi Venditti
Karin Wilhelm
Peggy Wilson
Alyssa Yingling

Members Absent:

Joe Cooper
David Dean

Staff Present:

Rob Schultz
Sunnee O'Rork
Tom Wilson
Jean Kaminski

Dr. Robbi Venditti, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Robbi Venditti, Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of July 25. There being none, Peggy Wilson made a motion to approve the July 25 minutes as written, and Alyssa Yingling seconded. The Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of July 25 and they will be posted on the city's website.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present.

Discussion – Discuss Researching and Preparing a Recommendation to City Council to Increase the In-kind Support Provided by the Creative Economy Fund – Peggy Wilson

Peggy Wilson requested that the past two year's Creative Economy Fund award summaries be sent to the Board in their meeting packets for review.

At the meeting, she raised several questions regarding the distribution of funds to Creative Economy Fund applicants. Ms. Wilson also suggested a letter from the Board to the Mayor and City Council requesting additional funding to the Creative Economy Fund be drafted. However, due to Cindy Ornstein's absence because of Fireball Run at Mesa Arts Center on the day of the Board meeting, the issue was tabled until the November 21 meeting. It was suggested that Peggy Wilson meet with Cindy Ornstein prior to the meeting with the results of their meeting shared at the next Board meeting.

Discussion – Discuss Possible Opportunities for Board Members to Be More Involved – Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair

Dr. Robbi Venditti, as the new Board chair, would like to provide experiences for the Board that would allow them to have conversations with community members and be able to promote citizen participation in events and programming offered at the Museums and Mesa Arts Center.

One way she proposed is to hold Board meetings at the Arts and Culture facilities (today the meeting is taking place at the Arizona Museum for Youth) to have the Board become more familiar with each facility. In January, the Board will meet at Mesa Contemporary Arts, and in March, at the Arizona Museum of Natural History.

Another suggestion was to provide show and tell opportunities from the different facilities for the Board to experience. For example, being able to sit in and observe how a show is juried.

She asked senior staff to think of ideas in which the Board might be able to participate and be more hands on. Rob Schultz suggested volunteering for openings, festivals, events, etc. This would give them a first-hand look at what it takes to present such programming. However, there is a process to become a volunteer that requires background checks and fingerprinting. Mr. Schultz said he would check with the Volunteer Coordinator at Mesa Arts Center and see how we might go about arranging something like that. Tom Wilson said that attending exhibit openings or gala events is a good way to network with other Board members and a good way to get to know the legislators and "movers and shakers" in Mesa. He added that advocacy is important to arts and culture and the more intimate the Board becomes with the Arts and Culture Department programs and how they are presented, the better they can communicate with the public. Sunnee O'Rork agreed and said that Arizona Museum for Youth too can use help with events like "Family Days," "Grandparents Day," etc.

Dr. Venditti then opened the floor for other suggestions from Board members. Peggy Wilson had prepared several ideas that she would like to see incorporated. 1) A while ago, there was an agenda item "Identify Items for Future Agendas" that appeared each month; she would like to see that put back on the agenda. 2) She would like to see one or two Museum and Cultural Advisory Board members able to sit on panels for arts and cultural programs, such as the Creative Economy Fund or other panels along that line that concern arts and culture. 3) She would like to see Board members volunteer to attend

certain programming and report back to the Board on that particular arts organization and/or program, such as Southwest Shakespeare, Mesa Encore Theatre, offerings at the Museums, etc.

Dr. Venditti agreed they were valid suggestions; Board members would like to be more involved.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr. said that in order to be more involved and more visible, he goes to shows (even if he does not have a ticket to the performance) and talks with people in the lobby.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee O’Rork

- Sunnee welcomed the Board to the Museum for the first time.
- “Dream On” closed on September 15 and “Art Speaks: A Way with Words” opens on Thursday, October 3, from 5 – 7 p.m. – the Board is invited to attend. This will be the Museum’s first traveling exhibition and the first for Barry Sparkman, the new traveling arts exhibition technician and manager for the traveling exhibitions program.
- The i.d.e.a. Museum will launch on February 6 – to be announced on October 16 at 10:00 a.m.
- The Museum will go dark at some point prior to the grand opening to change out things in ArtVille and changing exhibitions. For the grand opening, “Art of the Robot” will open. Right now the exhibition is at Appleton Museum of Arts in Florida. The Museum will augment the exhibit with lots of interactive activities.
- The Museum received \$10,000 from Boeing for the fourth year in a row, in this case, for the “Art of the Robot” exhibition.
- The Association of Children’s Museums Conference is coming to the Valley in May and Sunnee O’Rork was invited to speak.
- Sunnee O’Rork will be absent for the opening on October 3, as she was invited to the Association of Children’s Museums “Reimagining Children’s Museums Summit” in Boston.
- The Museum was present at the AZ SciTech Conference Kick-off event and the iProject event at ASU Polytechnic College of Innovation & Technology.
- The Museum will be part of Dana Park’s holiday festivities celebration on November 30 with a pop-up museum to share what the Museum offers with patrons attending the event.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- Mesa Grande had a good first season that began in January 2014 and closed for the summer months. On October 3, Mesa Grande will open for its second season. This year, the Museum is focusing on developing the education program at Mesa Grande. There will be archeology and Hohokam challenges that students on tours will get to participate in. The Museum has received \$66,000 in grant funding to help build the education programming.
- The Federal Building is scheduled to be renovated for the Mesa Historical Museum on the ground floor and Arizona Museum of Natural History will have storage space in the building. Demolition began September 25 – Tom Wilson was invited by the contractor to swing the first whack at the walls. They anticipate approximately 40 working days for the interior demolition. It is expected to be completed in 2015 in conjunction with the arrival of Light Rail. Mesa will have four museum’ within walking distance, as well as Mesa Arts Center.
- The Museum has been redoing Cretaceous Seas and will open the exhibit in December.
- The Museum had a great newspaper article on the artifacts and art they received as donations from the Southwest Mesoamerica and ancient Peru. They are building an exhibition around those objects and will premier upstairs in the Museum and ultimately this will be the first preamble to a major renovation downstairs.

Merlin Ellis asked if Mesa Historical Museum would be moving into the Federal Building. Tom Wilson answered that the Museum has closed down their Lehi location and the exhibitions will move to the Federal Building. Right now, their main exhibits are at 51-55 E. Main Street – Play Ball: The Cactus League Experience and Wallace and Ladmo.

Assistant Director’s Report – Rob Schultz

Rob Schultz extended Cindy Ornstein’s regrets at not being able to attend the meeting, as she needed to be present at Fireball Run at Mesa Arts Center (MAC). Fireball Run started in Colorado and will end in California. Mesa is one of the cities they are stopping at along the route. Exotic, expensive, cars were lining up on the Shadow Walk this afternoon. Drivers were divided into two teams for a 15 minute challenge at MAC. One team will create a mask of their partner in the Ceramic Studio and the other team learned a dance led by Ballet Etudes in the theaters. The teams are judged and winners announced. Drivers will be available for a meet and greet later in the afternoon followed by a reception on the Alliance Terrace.

Each driver has two missing children assigned to them and they provide support in helping to find them. In each city, a local charity is selected to benefit from funds raised – in Mesa the money will go to Helen's Hope Chest.

Mesa Arts Center hosted the Artspace launch on Wednesday, September 25. It was the kick-off event for the Market Survey Phase of the Artspace project. The survey will be distributed Valley-wide targeting several thousand artists and creative businesses. The survey is looking for artists and creative businesses' thoughts, desires, their response to potential artist live/work/exhibition/personal space near downtown Light Rail. We have partnered with Peoria, Glendale, Avondale, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, Gilbert and Chandler Arts and Culture Departments to help get the word out. Arizona Commission on the Arts will also participate in getting the word out. Artspace has done 32 projects across the country since 1990 and were impressed, as they have never heard of cities working together to get the word out. The survey is live and on-line on the MAC website. Board members were encouraged to take the survey.

Peggy Wilson asked if Artspace would have a website with questions and answers. Rob Schultz said he didn't know, but he can put her in contact with someone from Artspace who could answer that question.

Benedictine University is renting unused Studio time and space at MAC to offer three fine arts classes this session. They are providing the instructors and had more students sign up than expected. Nancy Aposhian added that two students at Benedictine are impressed with the Mesa Arts Center. She added that Tony Seevers, Student Life Director at Benedictine, is requiring each student do 10 hours of community service. He would like to have them complete that requirement at Mesa Arts Center and/or the Museums. Staff put her in touch with who to contact.

Karina Wilhelm asked how the Season Kick-off event went. Mr. Schultz replied, good. There were approximately 5,000 people who attended.

Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti introduced and welcomed two new Board members: Robert Valverde and Melissa Johnson.

Robert Valverde has been playing drums since he was a kid and became a professional at age 13. He collaborated with the Greater Los Angeles Children's Theater and several bands, including the US Army Band. During the day, he works as an MRI technologist. He attended Zappa plays Zappa and Return to Forever at Mesa Arts Center in the past.

Melissa Sue Johnson is a third grade teacher. This is her first year with Mesa Public Schools. She was previously at a Charter School in Chandler where she taught sixth grade for one year – this is her eighth year with third graders.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti: She likes receiving the weekly "News You Can Use" from MAC that provides a look at what is coming up at MAC in the next few weeks. It is a good resource to know what is happening in the coming weeks.

She and her husband brought friends with them to the Season Kick-off event. They thoroughly enjoyed the entire evening, from the exhibits, to the hot shop, metal smithing, and shows in the theaters.

She encouraged the Board to take in the 10 x 10 event at Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) on October 10 where artists create an original, unique piece of artwork on a 10 x 10 canvas. Each piece of artwork sells for \$100, and sales are first come, first served.

Alyssa Yingling: She attended the Season Kick-off event and liked the look of the program (an art palette) that someone handed her as she entered the campus. It made her happy that she didn't have to go searching for the information booth to get one. She thought the events were great and was impressed by the exhibits in MCA.

Peggy Wilson: Attended Southwest Shakespeare's "The Odyssey" and said it was funny, entertaining, and an excellent one-man show. She also attended the Artspace launch. She also was present at the Season Kick-off event and her favorite exhibition was "Messin' with the Masters."

Nancy Aposhian and Peggy Wilson participated on the National Geographic School Tickets panel.

The next scheduled meeting date is November 21, 2013 (the fourth week of November is Thanksgiving Day)

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Ornstein". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department